



Town of Portland, Connecticut

20 Freestone Avenue ■ Portland, CT 06480 ■ Phone: (860) 342-6770

www.portlandlibraryct.org ■ Fax: (860) 342-6778

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PORTLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY

To Appropriation Committee Members

By way of introduction, I am the Library Director of Portland Public Library. As you know, Portland is a town of approximately 9,000 in population. I want the Committee members to know how much my library staff and clients have valued the services of Connecticut Library Consortium and other state support of libraries.

I came to Connecticut 20 years ago. I was to manage a busy reference information service at Manchester Public Library. I was impressed with the collaboration and support that existed through the CLSUs (Cooperating Library Service Units). There were four of them in Connecticut, funded and administered under the Connecticut State Library. Manchester was part of the Capital region, I was in touch with my many accomplished librarians and with the staff of the CLSU- who were fantastic in getting us together and helping us to address concerns and plan for better services. Like everyone else, time flies while we are managing our day to day work and greeting our customers and staff. THE CLSUs provided the convening place and the organization to get librarians together that would typically not have taken place and certainly not as efficiently.

Since a merger to provide cost containment and efficiency, The Connecticut Library Consortium became the organizer of regional workshops and roundtables that are extremely valuable to library staff in helping to provide services. The efficiencies of having someone organize and provide for these meetings is critical to me as a small town librarian who must already wear many hats.

Twenty years ago, our clients were often finding they were drinking from a fire hose when they needed a sip of data. The Service Units were again convening librarians and experts to help us travel the new world of electronic services. Now, as we are challenged to provide legacy services – mainly books -while negotiating the brave newer world of electronic information and recreation, CLC's help in ensuring beneficial contracts and in sharing expertise, is invaluable. Our communities certainly appreciate the cost containment that the group purchasing ensures.

Programs are a large part of a public library's services. **The discounts for museum passes and supplies** make it possible for us to offer a good variety of programming. The CLC programming service provides a strong component of our infrastructure in programming for all ages. **The program listings and showcases** help us ensure good quality- without a great investment of library staff time spent investigating the credentials and references of performers.

A note about Connecticard, a service our community members value highly:

From a 2013 Connecticut Library Association newsletter:

Connecticard, which marks its 40th anniversary this year, is a state funded cooperative program that allows any Connecticut resident to use their hometown library card at every public library in Connecticut, providing equity of access to library materials statewide. Last year 4,916,021 items (over \$73 million worth of materials) were directly borrowed by Connecticut residents using Connecticard.

In response to significant concerns raised by many libraries participating in the Connecticard program, the State Library funded a study to determine **the true cost of circulating an item in a Connecticut Library which turned out to be \$1.05. The current reimbursement rate is \$0.20 per transaction. Municipalities bear well over 80% of the costs of this program. Please note that costs have increased a much larger number of items are shipped now.**

Today, nine containers of materials are waiting to be shipped out via **Connecticar**. Remember we are a smaller library and this is not an atypical amount of material that is moved daily shipped out and received, to serve our community members and other folks in our consortium.

In 2013, a study by MORE Regional Entities Committee noted some ways to **Leverage Cooperative Purchasing Benefits**. One of two directives was to use the Connecticut Library Consortium as a model for merging regional services to provide statewide support

Through the collaborative work, and Groups discount purchasing, Connecticut Library Consortium has helped public libraries to save our communities 7.1 million dollars per year

Portland's savings last year:

Direct: \$36,935 for books, databases and other materials. This does not include training programs and the staff time saved through CLC providing for training and meetings. **Some of the discounted items** that allowed our Friends group and our operating budget to provide for our clients:

AWE early literacy station attracts our youngest to educational games. Programmers provide free entertainment and enrichment to families and individuals, especially during our summer reading program that brings in hundreds of people.

JobNow provided for many sessions of personal assistance as well as information on job hunting.

Museum passes have become a much valued services. The discounts we get on the software for the museum pass management program and for scheduling of meetings and programs allow us to contain those costs for our town and use dollars for purchase of books.

These services would be reduced and it is likely we would have a much smaller array of services if the support we now enjoy from CLC were no longer provided.

State grant dollars were used a few years back to supplement a joint project funded by our library's special funds and the Friends of the Portland Library. Those dollars provided a third leg in the stool that supported new computers and computer furniture in the adult and teen area of Portland Library. Such projects will be reduced if state funds are not available to supplement our budgets for special purchases.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet Nocek
Library Director
Portland Library
20 Freestone Ave.
Portland, Ct 06480
jnocek@portlandct.org
tel; 860-342-6771